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The social construction of fear and the media representation of migrants

La construcción social del miedo y la representación mediática de los migrantes

ABSTRACT:

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the theoretical framework of the social construction of fear in modern society. From the early twentieth century, fear has been an object of analysis by classical sociological thought: the spread of border, and the rise of the nation-state has brought the need to reshape the national identity. In this context, new form of exclusion has begun to spread, and refugees and migrants have started to be considered «other» apart from the national majority.

The representation of migrants in media narrative is often accompanied by feelings of disappointment and fear. The media narrative in contemporary society, contributes to create stereotypical imagine about the stranger, enforcing a circuit of fear around the presence of the stranger.

The author is going to explain the sociological analysis enriched by different point of view: the interactions dimension and the deterministic dimension of differences, considering an analysis of what fear is as a feeling toward migrants. In the contemporary era, on the one hand, fear and anxiety has spread in relation to migration phenomena; on the other, an intercultural process and superdiverse context have started to emerge. The rise of globalisation has led to the birth of globalised communities in which a kind of hybrid identity stands out from the dichotomy national/foreigner identity; a new kind of identity, symbolic and fluid, has started to spread, an identity that goes beyond the physical and social borders of the nation-state.

KEY WORDS:
Migration; stranger; social representation; fear; integration.

RESUMEN:

El objetivo de este artículo científico es el análisis teórico-sociológico de la construcción social del miedo en la sociedad moderna y el impacto que esta construcción ha tenido en la creación de representaciones mediáticas y sociales de las personas migrantes en las sociedades europeas actuales.

Desde principios del siglo xx, la construcción del Estado nación moderno, entendido como un Estado en el que la identidad nacional se fundamenta en los rasgos culturales, lingüísticos y sociales que unen a todo un pueblo, hizo surgir un sentimiento, el del miedo, hacia todo lo que se consideraba fuera de la identidad nacional. El extranjero, el otro, ha sido objeto de estudio en el pensamiento sociológico clásico desde Schütz hasta Simmel, estudiosos que elaboraron

los conceptos de exclusión/inclusión en un grupo social. Estos análisis clásicos se extienden hasta nuestros días, en los que la figura del extranjero engloba sobre todo a los emigrantes, los refugiados, los llamados forasteros, que a menudo forman parte de las minorías étnicas que residen en el territorio de un Estado.

La llegada de la globalización ha traído consigo una alteración de la frontera nacional y, con ella, también de la identidad nacional. La narración mediática de los fenómenos migratorios ha contribuido a crear representaciones sociales que suelen ir acompañadas de sentimientos de preocupación y miedo. Las representaciones pueden alimentar una visión distorsionada de la realidad en la que no hay una verdadera separación entre la percepción y los hechos.

En la sociedad contemporánea, la aparición de nuevas comunidades globales interconectadas ha dado lugar a la difusión de contranarrativas mediáticas, portadoras de nuevos significados culturales simbólicos que perfilan nuevas formas de socialización y la llamada identidad social híbrida.

1. Introduction

In the first part of the following article, the author is going to analyse the social dimension of fear related to the building of the modern nation-state in the European context. The author will explore a few sociological concepts central to the discussion about the political and social framework in which the modern nation-state was established; the author would explore the birth of the national identity in its modern attribution from the late 19th century onwards. Along with the need of a homogeneous culture, the nation-state has started to deal with the emerging claim of ethnic minorities who ask to be legally recognised. That social phenomenon has moved sociological studies to better understand the reality around us; process of social and cultural identification, internalisation, and externalisation of cultural paradigms, along with the figure of the «stranger» and the «foreigner» have been studied by classical sociological theories.

In the second part of the article, the author will explore sociological thought from Schütz to Simmel, the pioneering sociologists whose work has been at the core of modern social studies about the meaning of interaction in social groups, in relation to the figure of the «stranger». The author will explore some theoretical aspects of the symbolic interactionism together with some features of the approach made by the sociologists of the Chicago School, amongst others, R.E Park.

The author will focus the last part of the article on the impact of media narratives, and on the construction of social representation of migrants in contemporary times; the media narratives continue to shape different truth about the reality around us, especially when addressing global issues such as migration phenomena. On the one hand, media narratives communicate different kinds of emotions, often fear or disappointment, contributing to the creation of a stereotypical imagine of the other/foreigner; on the other hand, the rise of globalised communities and that of new urban space cd. *ethnoscapes* contribute to shaping new forms of identity, giving birth to a counter-narrative about the foreigner-national dichotomy; a new form of social groups has started to be shaped out of the physical-geographical border of the nation state.

2. Metodología

The methodological approach is intended to be theoretical and analytical. The author will explain the social dimensions of fear and that of representation, following the interactionist and symbolic point of view, widespread in the micro sociological analysis. The convergence of a sociological multi-perspective is also taken into consideration: from the historical background that lies at the core of sociological studies about the figure of the stranger, the interactionist paradigm is one of the critical paradigms that emerges from the need to justify the evolution of social groups dynamics in relation to identitarian challenges.

Methodologically, it is worth considering that the author will also argue that symbolic interactionism is the main theoretical approach that supports the following discussion, whereas structuralism is widely recognised in its assumption for the analysis of individual response/ behaviours to institutional power.

The interest of the author regarding critical sociology, such as the study of urban spaces and that of social marginality, would be considered to better understand the process of interaction within social groups. Along with the spread of new social demands, contemporary sociologists have tried to depict global dimensions: on this point, the author would mention the *diasporic communities* and *ethnoscapes*.

3. The nation-state and the construction of social fear

Until the mid-twentieth century, the nation-state represented the essential basis for the identification of the European people; it also represented the bulwark against all kinds of disaggregating tendencies and braking processes of ethnic and cultural differentiation. After the First World War, the need to empower national identity was a compelling issue in many European countries; thus, European governments were aimed at reinforcing the border, both geographical and political and started to promote more nationalistic policies.

The legacy of the Enlightenment had oriented modern Western ideology towards the overcoming of cultural particularism. Whereas the nation-state continued to be recognized, the process of empowerment of national identity was weakened by the phenomenon of cultural rebellion and the additional rising of ethnic revival. After the two world wars, the apparatuses of coercion, like police and military forces, were enforced, and the idea of «defending the nation» started to be the main *raison d'être* of the nation-state.

In this social context, the concept of fear and its related use in political practices has served the majority at power in the long post-modern era. It is acceptable to say that the modern states have constructed a policy oriented toward the use of social fear as a tool to keep and expand privileges of *élites* and control the masses (Skoll, 2010).

The birth of the nation-state was primarily related to the empire of *Felix Austria*[1] (Sartori, 2000), known for its multinational composition, whose members belonged to different na-

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1/ Here, *Felix Austria* is the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy of the late 1800s, before the rise of modern nationalism.

tions. Nevertheless, the cosmopolitan features started to fade away from the nation along with the construction of the geographical border of the modern European states. In its modern attribution, the nation-state became an organic entity rooted in not only a linguistic but also a mythical past. Anderson (2006) explains what a modern nation is: an imagined political community whose identity is rooted in some cultural artefacts (oral culture and written culture).

With the French Revolution, the nation invoked the spirit of the people (of *Volk Geist* and *Volkseele*) and the sense of belonging to a blood identity (meaning a racial identity, not to be confused with the *Ius sanguinis*). With the advent of the nation-state and its requirement of unity, the terms «ethnicity» and «ethnic group» began to assume their modern meanings[2].

The ethnic group started to be identified as a minority in opposition to the national group, the majority. The dichotomy national/ethnic had its root in the construction of the national identity, whereas the «stranger» and the «foreigner» began to be recognized as the «outsider», and the social construction of fear of the other/outsider found a fertile ground in which to grow.

In reason for that, the construction of the symbolic enemy along with the production of national symbols (identification of a blood identity, languages, and traditions), occurred and the shift from the liberal ideology of the nineteenth century to the modern imperialism of the twentieth century was evident. Foucault explains the bond between institutions/power and knowledge and identifies that process known as the governmentalisation of the state; a state where economic and social knowledge has a special bond that is used to create special programs of control.

The nation-state and the political borders, along with a confined monocultural identity, enforced the crystallisation of culture; Foucault recognises 'the power of truth' and that of 'institutional surveillance' as the main features of those governments.

The construction of the symbolic enemy represented by the other (people that stand apart from the national majority) started to be recognised and considered as a threat to statal power: in addition, the *eye-of-power*, and its extension, such as military forces, started to be the main tool to fight the symbolic enemy.

Importantly, power-knowledge conceptualisation increased the «fear of the other», indeed the construction of power-knowledge bond is grounded in the conceptualisation of an embedded knowledge that finds its manifestation in practices of control and their related forms of resistance (Power, 2011; Skoll, 2010); power-knowledge bond manifests itself in a form of disciplinary knowledge that has the attempt of controlling behaviours. Those discipline tend to be a rule embedded in the social cultural system; thus, the idea of the stranger as outsider, and the idea of being *out-of-the-rule* of the state depends on the power-knowledge conceptualisation and its bond with the national identity.

It has been during the twentieth century, with the advent of wound-up nationalism, that the figure of the refugee started to be depicted as «the one that resides outside of his country of origin and cannot or does not want to return because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion» (Geneva Convention, 1951).

2/ Extract from my PhD Thesis (2016), Integration and Immigration: the ethnic press in the cities of Rome and London; published for Teseo University Press "Modernity and Multi-ethnic society (2020).

With the increasing international instability and the tensions between states during the two world wars, the image of the 'stranger' began to take on a precise meaning. During the Cold War, the convention formerly categorized the foreigner or the refugee for the first time in modern European history.

Hannah Arendt was the main intellectual to recognise the place of the refugee in the nation-state, emphasising that in the state, civil rights were denied to refugees at the time, such as the right to be part of the membership in the national society. Even though they were outsiders before the bulwark of the nation-state, they were individuals in transit or vagabonds, while in the twentieth century they started to be identified as an out-group, and the state started to use power and institutional legitimacy to exclude them from society. The more the flow of refugees intensified, the more the need to create a legal status in which the refugee could be included was relevant to the state.

The culture of fear resides in the idea of a nation that needs to stand for unity and homogeneity, and the distance between nationals and foreigners has become even stronger in the contemporary era, with the arrival of flows of refugees in the early twenty-first century; the more a state adopts a mononational policy which implies some form of exclusion, the more the form of segregation or expulsion of unwanted minorities starts to be visible to the public eye.

The attempt to avoid multi-ethnic features of the national culture has brought along a need of broad recognition of those people part of minorities whose rights and culture have started to be cancelled by the need of homogeneous national culture.

More and more, the ethnic features of other cultures would pose a threat to the national identity of the modern European state; the social response to that is the definition of a policy of fear along with the construction of a symbolic enemy considered to be against the majority and the institutional power. Foreigners, or better to say migrants, especially refugees have become groups of stateless individuals, not always welcomed in the state. As described by the historian Hobsbawm, cultural practices and symbols remain the factors that determine the national identity; the social distance between the «the national Us» and «the Others» is a result of the process of affirmation of national culture because the national culture exists within certain boundaries only if it recognises in the other an ethnic group different from that which is the national community.

In modern times, the construction of the symbolic enemy «*the outsider with different connotations from the national identity*», has highlighted the great sociocultural distance amongst European nation-state: more and more process of social hierarchy and stratification has led to a marginalisation of the «outsider» and the policy of defending the national identity and to protect the border has emphasised the distance between the majority in power and ethnic minorities living in a state.

It is also true that the policy of reinforcing borders and the rising of social fear due to European scepticism along with the world wars was crucial for the construction and the circulation of European discourse around the concepts of nationalism and nationality.

On the one hand, the fear of the «stranger» as a social construction has been internalised by the culture of the European states that have fought two world wars; on the other hand, the weaknesses of the nation-state organisation have been rooted in the need of maintaining a homogeneous national culture within the national borders against the stranger; this contradiction have alleged a possible decline of the nation-state in the post-modern era.

3.1 THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE STRANGER IN SOCIOLOGICAL THOUGHT

When analysing the term «fear» in sociology, it is worth considering that Durkheim's sociology of institutions has been a pioneering analysis together with the wider line of studies called sociology of interactions, with its pioneering authors Georg Simmel and George Herbert Mead. We can extend the analysis of fear even in the analysis made by the Chicago School; Park and Burgess focused on the study of social control: they investigated the processes that induce individual behaviours against or within social control.

In this framework, it is questionable to analyse fear only as an individual response to belief, expectations, and values whereas following the analysis made by Simmel and Mead, it is relevant that fear is more a result of different interactions between institutions, individuals, and society. Each analysis does not substitute the other: individuals may interact with society and institutions while having their own background (culture) and «fear» is a social fact that is shaped by the consensual / conflicting relation amongst social actors.

Simmel, in *Excursus on the Foreigner*, gives emphasis on the contradictory role played by the foreigner in the process of establishing the identity of a group, because «the stranger is not one who today come and tomorrow goes but, one who today come and tomorrow stay» (Simmel, 1983); the stranger holds an immanent position outside the border and in front border, he/she is both near and far from the group but never fully integrated in the group, he/she is a person who does not belong to the group but whose presence and cultural difference represent the symbolic boundaries with which the group compares and defines its standards and values.

The categorisation of foreigners as «different» sets the stage for the construction of social organisation and social behaviours that implies fear or in opposition interest towards the cultural differences.

In late 1944, the figure of the stranger was studied by Alfred Schütz in his essay «the stranger». From Simmel to Schütz, the contemporary sociological features of the stranger have been described and analysed. What they expressed in their essays, it is a frequent reality of the integration patterns referred to specific individuals who feel in/out of a social group.

Schutz, more than Simmel, analyses the communication process that lies at the core of acceptation/ refuses mechanism of a social group against an outsider. Schütz explains the characteristic dimension of being strangers to a group at a given time. In the analysis of Schütz, the stranger is someone who is passing through, he/she is not part of a group and maintains a physical and social distance from the social group, he/she is not trapped in a precise social label and a social identity, he/she is purely objective towards other social groups because they remain external to it: «strangers» have a vantage despite their marginal condition, they are able to participate in everyday life yet still maintain a natural position, a feeling of detachment / not affection.

In the *Critique de la modernité*, A. Touraine recognises the value of modernity and the gap between ancient time and modern time. The figure of the stranger has changed along with the modernisation of culture and the way of thinking and organising the world through science, where there is no place for other more backward or traditional cultures. Even though, the figure of the stranger has continued to be at the core of many sociological analyses: the feeling of

fear/interest toward the story of a stranger, a person far from our cultural and geographical connotations, represents a mythical past that every modern culture hides in its root.

With the advent of progress, classic sociological analysis referred to cultural differences have been slightly replaced by modern sociological studies focused on the role of ethnic differences in contemporary societies; those studies were aimed at the understanding of those differences from an interactional and communicative point of view and how those differences affect the structure of the social groups.

Classical theories concerning the structure of modern society recognise the primacy of the economy as a guiding principle that moves all the cultural and social differences in society. Marxist theory along with the deterministic view of society, recognises in the dichotomy structure/superstructure, the root differences amongst social groups: the nature of capitalist production produces a disparity amongst social groups and their place in society. In this context, the social and ethnic hostilities come because of a fact, an objective problem, due to the alienating structure of the capitalist system.

From the late nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries, modern theories on ethnicity, such as functional theory, interactional and symbolic theory began to be expounded. The ethnic conflict started to be analysed because of different cultural and social backgrounds that are the result of social actions, behaviours and can be influenced by institutional rules, and not merely imposed by an overstructured ideological system. To reach out and categorize different cultures through a rational social scheme, the modern state has developed policy called policy of integrations: with multiculturalism, interculturalism and the policy of the «melting pot», modern states have tried to adequality collocate minority groups with different and sometimes opposite cultural backgrounds from the majority.

By giving an example of that, the model of cultural pluralism in the early '90s (1920-1960), followed by the Salad Bowl model (the bowl ethnic of the 1960s-1970s), and the multiculturalism model (which became established from the 1970s onwards), both in the European states as well as in the United States. Those models, formerly known as policies of integration, have been stimulated by a set of ethnocentric tendencies, that from the twentieth century onwards, have become more and more visible to the state.

In this wider context, feelings of fear against the different minority groups have found a fertile ground to develop; on the one hand, policies of integration have been useful to institutions in order to better organise social and cultural demand from the society, on the other, those policies have reduced the space of contact amongst social actors and have implemented a phenomenon of ghettoisation of the stranger.

While emphasising the cultural differences amongst social groups, organising the social-cultural demands, the gap between the «national us» and the «other» has become a fact, commonly accepted by public opinion: the fusion of culture has been avoided by modern policies of integration that have preferred a rational and schematical organisation of social groups, creating disparities in the representation of each social group.

Multiculturalism, cultural pluralism and monoculturalism are generally understood using the political model reference, which was born following the need to regulate the phenomenon of ethnic revival, and which administrative bodies can use to control the rights of minorities. Multiculturalism is a regulatory response that does not need to manifest itself in all multiethnic societies or, to put it better, that there cannot be a multicultural society that is not also

multiethnic, but there may be multiethnic societies that are not necessarily multicultural (Cesareo, 2000).

4. The representation of migrants in mainstream media

The problem of social representation of migrants and ethnic minorities is the issue of the following theoretical analysis; indeed, the author analysis is aimed to remark the important place of media in the social construction of the stranger and how this construction can really affect public opinion in both a good and a bad way[3].

The central role of media narratives in the representation of migration flows as well as in shaping public opinion has long been recognised and shared (Matsaganis, 2011; McLuhan, 2002).

The mediatic narrative is mainly the first tool in shaping stereotypical features of social actors, often bad features (*i.e.*, migrants/criminal - poor people/ migrants 'communities, etc.), moving conflict emotions such as fear/hunger/compassion toward a «stranger» in the media audience.

Media narratives influence the spread of social conflict around a hot topic (such as migrants and refugees' community integration). The conflict arises when the social representation given by mainstream media (newspaper, television, internet) becomes a stereotypical imagine/representation of those minorities, migrants or refugees part of a state and it starts to be shared and approved by the dominant group (the national community). The dialectic between different social representations is linked to the need to classify each other in terms of belonging to the dominant or minority culture.

The more mainstream media elicit a national consensus about a representation the more this representation becomes publicly acceptable. Therefore, the stereotypical representation of migrants given by the communicative interaction amongst media-society, becomes a shared truth; in this social context, it is more important what media shapes about reality than the reality itself.

Facts are not merely objective but the product of a social circumstances; media can provoke emotions too, as well as feelings of fear and discontent. On the one hand, there are the arenas to which media contribute building the symbolic meanings of immigrants and increasing the phenomena of social alarmism; on the other hand, media may also help to raise public awareness around the issue.

The messages that mainstream media convey to the society gives birth to a new circuit of culture, shared by the national community of a state. For example, in period of historic transition and crisis, media narratives tend to evoke the sense of identity and attachment to traditional value of the nation in order to define the homogeneous image of the nation in contrast to the ethnic and disaggregating tendencies; those tendencies can be represented also by the arrival of new minority communities that ask to be recognised.

3/ The theoretical approach to the problem of representations does not include the methodical analysis of the practice of representation in national media with the example of specific news reporting; those research activities are better illustrated in articles with an empirical research output.

In media discourse there is not a real label that the audience can perceive to understand where the «real truth» is: the narrative itself becomes the truth, not the content of the news. Influenced by media, the political discourse maintains a tendency to emphasise the emergency factor related to the migration trend, linking the issue to the sphere of public security and the problem of maintaining the national border. «Fear» and «social panic» are the most shared and conveyed emotions in the mediascape analysis when speaking about migrants and refugees.

Furthermore, fear is intrinsically the most common emotional reaction toward an identity national shifting. The process of developing feelings of fear toward migrants and refugees lies on the stereotyped imagery of those people created by the media narrative.

When speaking about perception and reality, it is worth considering the sociology of knowledge that tries to keep investigation those aspect of reality; it is worth considering the approach of study carried out during the 1960s by sociologists P. L. Bergmann and T. Luckmann on the social construction of reality.

It is possible to admit that what we perceive as «real» might vary from person to person and from society to society; the perception is produced, shared, and preserved through social processes. On the one hand, the phenomenon of externalisation of perception carries along the possibility of sharing a social reality, widely recognised; on the other, the phenomenon of internalisation carries a social fact into the mindset and consciousness of a social actor, through socialisation.

Giving an example of that, the common sense about feeling and behaviours is given by our perception of the world: the idea that crime reduction can be resolved with a restriction in the arrival of refugees is a media narrative rooted in the social stereotypical construction of the stranger as the «main problem of crime and public safety». The dominant discourse around crime, public safety and integration of migrants has led to misunderstanding about «facts» and «perception»: the problem is not to resolve crime but to avoid foreigners/strangers to commit a crime. In this way, the fact of the crime is marginally relevant in the media discourse, because the real object of the media narrative is the presence of migrants who are involved in crime.

This is a communicative-interactional process that could affect every sphere of social life, from migrant communities' integration to political discourses about hot topic (jobs, employment, retirement schemes and go on).

Moving from the interactionist paradigm, Simmel has always recognised the role of modernity because of an evolution which comes from a social communicative attitude. Indeed, Simmel's work on the stranger appears very coherent with the contemporary social context because he suggests that the encounter with the stranger will generate different social feeling from fear to interest, and the way in which we perceive the other will influence every other consideration about a social group or reality.

In the current time, national media seem to be agitator of consents of the public opinion around integration and immigration; the consensus of public opinion is relevant to the circulation of a social truth shared by the majority. The problematic aspect of the stereotypical imagine evoked by the mainstream narrative around the figure of the stranger as well as that of refugees and migrants is a fundamental part of study of sociology of interaction that aims to understand the framework of the media-society circuit; whereas the media keeps alive the

consensus rule for the collective claim of cultural identity, urban spaces continue to change and to host new forms of identity, considered as a «marginal identity».

That marginal identity occupies a space that is not reserved to the majority and in the sociology of marginality, the analysis of that identity is studied as a main result of the process of integration and/or ghettoisation of migrant communities in European states.

In the study of the remarkable Italian sociologist Ferrarotti, the analysis of the space is relevant to understand the modern national identity and those considered at the margins. Marginality is not the result of poverty or the non-integration process; marginal spaces are the other side of the process of economic globalisation, and cultural deprivation. On the one hand, globalisation has fostered the spread of a globalized identity, an interconnected world, without social and economic borders; on the other hand, globalisation has fostered the birth of local identity, those at the margins, whose people want to «claim» their cultural features apart from the globalized and hybrid culture which is in a state of continuous change.

It is worth considering that the need for categorisation of social and cultural identity forms part of the rational statal scheme that tries to organise the «contamination» of cultures, endorsed by the spreading of a globalised culture.

The more the geographic national border is constantly being relocated for national trends, including transnationalism, the more the spread of the category of diasporic communities and that of hybrid cultures rise in the social European scenario.

Urban sociologists have tried to define the increasing complexity of the relationships with words such as «superdiversity» or «multiethnic societies». Indeed, within the urban context of modern and contemporary societies, ethnic issues have become more important than was expected in the pre-modern era.

4.1 Beyond fear: the rise of globalised communities

It is worth considering that in a contemporary urban context, there is a strong cultural mobility circulating in public spaces, a real "traffic" in which cultural meanings undergo phenomena of hybridisation.

That sort of hybridisation has modified traditional and conventional behaviours: in contemporary societies, anxiety of being contaminated by other cultures is still a reality. On the one hand, there are people who would love to put emphasis on the cultural and social differences part of a state and to improve e promote a dialogue amongst different communities (majority / minorities). On the other hand, there are people who need to avoid the cultural contamination, to balance their personal identity related to a physical and psychological border. Those behaviours are part of complex communicative interactions results of process of globalisation; neither the promotion nor the negation of the cultural differences is the answer to the cultural clashes that have characterised and continue to characterise this century.

We need to be aware of the phenomenon of cultural hybridisation considered as the frequency and variety of meetings between cultures in the contemporary scene. As Appadurai (1996) analyses, in the contemporary urban spaces many social communicative actions happen; the "space" has begun the real object of social studies, the *ethnoscapes* or *diasporic public* spaces are the contemporary spaces where people of different backgrounds

find themselves immersed in the *multitude*: migrants, tourists, professionals, travellers, and cosmopolitan members, at the same time as members of associations and political groups. In these ethnoscapes, social interactions are born in a synchronicity both locally and globally and generate substantial flows of meanings, ideas, and information. The rise of global communities and the symbolic identity of those communities, that apart from the geographical border, share similar cultural taste (musical, sportive, religious and go on) is the step forward the idea of «fear/anxiety» of the other.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the culture of fear that has been a tool to control masses during the twentieth century has been slightly replaced by the culture of anxiety: the need to reposition our national identity in opposition to a wider global non-defined identity has come because of the need of balancing the migration phenomenon that characterizes this century more than the past two centuries.

In a deep interconnected world, emotions continue to spread very fast: the fear of the other, as the main antagonist of the national identity, has been grounded in our mindset. Nevertheless, a new form of inclusion and interaction amongst social groups has begun to spread along with the rise of the wide global virtual connection.

The identitarian challenge the national identity must deal with carries along with it a constant need for relocating traditions, values and what is considered «national» apart from the other cultures. In the current times, cultural clashes are vivid, more than was expected by classical sociological theories. Apart from the national identity, a hybrid identity that imposes itself as a new form of connection and global interaction has started to create new social dynamics, which are quicker than traditional and political dynamics: those new forms of interconnections may undergo the birth of new behaviours, and also new forms of socialisation that may enforces a cosmopolitan mindset, far from the national-ethnic clashes, a socialisation that originates from the a idea of being a citizen of the world, and not only of a specific nation-state.

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